

I am submitting testimony in support of S.B. 1054, An Act Concerning Students with Dyslexia. This bill is a great start but I feel it must be expanded upon to include the identification and remediation of students with dyslexia at the earliest time possible. Last year, I came here with my son Thomas, as he presented his testimony in support of last year's bill. We were thrilled when it passed and excitedly attended the signing ceremony in Hamden.

Along with the Dyslexia bill, Gov. Malloy signed a second bill, which granted many more students' access to Early Childhood Education. Since this is my field, I was very happy about this.

However, as I thought about both bills, I began to think about the number of young children I had worked with during my years of teaching at The Valley YMCA Childcare Center in Ansonia. I loved them all, but I couldn't help but notice that there were quite a few of them whom I suspected had dyslexia.

These were the children who were extremely bright. They built tall towers out of blocks that didn't fall down. They made cities out of Legos. They spent countless hours in the kitchen areas

planning delicious pretend meals and time in the Dramatic Play area, transforming themselves into princesses, policemen, and firemen.

However, I couldn't help but notice that these same kids had difficulty finding the teddy bear with their name on it when it came time to check in and out during the school day. They carefully avoided the library area, and often the writing center. During circle time, they became quiet when asked about the "letter of the week".

They couldn't tell you the names of the colors they used to draw and paint wonderful pictures. They dreaded the day they would have to make their page in the "ABC Book".

Since my son Thomas had dyslexia, I became well aware of the signs. I also was able to follow some of these children for a few years after their graduations, and was saddened to learn that they were floundering in their respective school systems, save for a few who were able to obtain the right remediation.

According to Sally Shaywitz, the author of *Overcoming Dyslexia*, it is possible to identify children who have dyslexia before they must endure the humiliation of entering kindergarten without even being able to recognize the letters in their own name.

According to Shaywitz, “The five year old who can’t quite learn his letters becomes the six year old who can’t match sounds to letters, and the fourteen year old who dreads reading out loud and the twenty one year old who reads excruciatingly slowly. These threads persist throughout a person’s life, but with early intervention, this scenario doesn’t need to happen”.

Kindergarten was a nightmare rather than a joy for my son because we were not able to get him diagnosed with dyslexia until first grade. We must not let any more young children fall through the cracks. Thank you very much,

Patricia E. Rimkunas, Preschool Teacher, Seymour